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Stormflower

[image]

I guess I should introduce myself :3, since I didn't in *Utulio*. My name is Termipult, or Termi-chan (not irl, if you're wondering) and this is my first ever Warriors story. I'm a huge fan of the series, and I hope you guys will enjoy it.

I'll be adding author notes along the way (words in bold and parenthesis), so stay tuned.

...

Stormflower crouched in the long grass next to a pond, eyeing her prey. Being a WindClan cat, stalking wasn't much in their nature. It was more of running in wide, open-spaced land and feeling the wind in their whiskers.

Why she was doing this? She had no idea. Maybe it was because leaf-bare **(winter)** was coming soon. She waggled her hindquarters and sprang out from her hiding spot. The rabbit she had targeted pricked its ears and immediately starting running in the opposite direction. Stormflower raced after it. She tripped and fell on her face, but got up again and started pursuing it.

I can't believe a rabbit is faster than me, thought Stormflower as the furry brown animal began to outrun her. She was a *WindClan* cat, fast and lithe! As she was staring to give up on the rabbit, a black blur shot out from the nearest bush and raced after the rabbit. Within seconds a black she-cat was padding triumphantly to Stormflower with her prey in her jaws.

Stormflower frowned. Her Clanmate, Frozengaze. Her pelt was black as midnight, with white socks and stripes along her back and forhead. Her blue eyes glittered like diamonds against coal. **(similies. similies everywhere)**

"Well hello," Frozengaze said, setting down the rabbit.
"Is something wrong?" Stormflower muttered. Usually the black she-cat loved to boast and be "superior".
"I could ask you the same thing," Frozengaze countered, flicking her tail. "We would've lost a precious piece of prey to the slowest she-cat in the Clan." Frozengaze held up her chin high, like she was about to order Stormflower to her death.
"Yeah," Stormflower muttered sarcastically. "I was so very helpless against that rabbit."

Frozengaze narrowed her eyes, which was unnerving - the reason Shadestar gave her that name. She picked up her prey. "You're impossbile. C'mon then, let's get this rabbit back to camp."

...

Stormflower flopped herself down on her nest, exhausted. Above, **(If you don't know or forgot why there's no roof, it's bc WindClanners like the open sky, like Stormflower said in the beginning)** the stars were finally starting to appear on the horizon. The other warriors were asleep next to her, some snoring softly. After Frozengaze and she had returned to camp, Shadestar had been quite mad at Stormflower for going alone, which made Frozengaze somewhat happy.

See, lately there had been an outbreak of dogs spotted in random places, like the river-border into ThunderClan territory, or in the plains WindClan used to hunt on. There were no reported deaths...yet. It was only a matter of time before the dogs scented the cats.

So Shadestar had put her to work cleaning the elders' den and collecting herbs for their medicine cat, Leaftail.

Stormflower closed her eyes and finally fell asleep.

...

When she finally opened her eyes she gasped. She was surprised to see empty space in all directions. When she looked up, a ghost nebula splattered across the sky. Underneath her was the swirling

lights of the Auroura Borealis, making sounds like little crystals gently rubbing against each other. Overall, the place had an eerie feel to it.

Stormflower held up her paw. It was translucent. *Just like StarClan cats.* For a scary moment, Stormflower thought she had passed in her sleep, but then she remembered that Leaftail had told her about a place like this. It was where StarClanners would come and commune with each other about important matters, like a prophecy.

The air shimmered in front of her. A she-cat with long snowy fur and amber eyes stood there with a lean, ginger tom with leopard-like spots on his face and spine. "Who are you?" Stormflower asked breathlessly.
The white female held a paw up her her chest. "I am Snowclaw, and this -" she beckoned at the ginger tom "- is Leopardface." The tom dipped his head respectfully, a hard look in his yellow eyes.
Stormflower felt herself shaking. For some reason, the two cats emanated coldness. Not like the cold you would feel walking out in a snowy morning. The type where it left you feeling angry and trapped and unable to do anything about it, like lava under obsidian.
"W-why are you here?" Stormflower stammered. "Where am *I?"*
Snowclaw smiled, a creepy thing to do while standing under the cosmics.
"Haven't you figured it out, dear?" she asked sweetly. "To deliver you!"

...

Sorry this chapter was so short :(.

What is wrong with me x,D...

Expect another update soon!

Rescue

[image]

Stormflower knew she had to bide time. Sooner or later the sun would rise and she would wake up; free of this living nightmare.
She flicked her tail warily. "Yeah. Sure. But before that, can you tell me what this place is?"
Snowclaw the cat spirit sneered in annoyance. "Well, I guess we could tell you a few things before your eternal pain arrives. This is the Nebulae Cave." She gestured around like it was some grand mansion. "The sky is always changing from one nebula to the other."

Stormflower looked up. Sure enough, the sky was fading and reappearing with one image after the other. There were ghost nebula, Great Carinas, Tiger's Eye, and so forth.

"Okay," Stormflower said. "So you like stars. Now, what's with this whole delivering thing?"

"Our boss told us to bring you to him," Leopardface said. "No more questions on that. Also, with the eternal pain, I guess you'll have to wait and find out."

Stormflower swallowed nervously. *This is just a dream. A stupid, mouse-brained dream.*

But it didn't feel like it. In fact, it felt very *real.* The nebulae were real. The floor was real. These cats were very much real.

"Who is your boss?" she asked.

"A very great cat," Snowclaw cooed. "He's handsome, muscular, clever, strong, did I mention ha-"

Leopardface reached over and smacked her upside the head.

The she-cat hissed at him indignantly. Leopardface faced Stormflower. "I'll explain, since you're meeting him shortly and will need to have some warnings and info. Our boss is named Kaiju. He has a somewhat strange personality. Two of them, in fact. Long ago he had made a contract with an ancient spirit not even his followers know of. The spirit harbors a part of his soul now, so now every often he will change into an enitirely different creature; even more deadly and unfriendly than his original form. I've never seen it. I have this information only thanks to some comrades who have seen the whole thing. And they've all been exterminated because of that. He doesn't know I know this, so I have to be careful."

"And now you're telling me," Stormflower said devastatingly. "So now I'll be targeted."

"You have been from the start," Snowclaw said, baring her teeth disgustedly.

"I get the gist," Stomflower said. "That cat is evil, and I don't belong here." She turned and ran at a random direction, hoping to tear some kind of illusion or rift to StarClan or whatever. Instead she hit a wall, and just for a second she glimpsed the towering obsidian wall blocking her way, before it disappeared.

Behind her came laughter. Stormflower turned to see Snowclaw with an amused look. "There is no escaping," she growled, tail lashing hysterically. "That word isn't even in our vocabulary."

Just then, a tear appeared off to the left of Snowclaw. Out leaped three cats.

"How did you get here?" Leopardface yowled, hair standing up.

"We sealed the perimeter! Impossible!" Snowclaw said at the same time.

The first one, a russet tom with blazing green eyes and white underbelly, barreled into Snowclaw, the two a blur of brown and white on the floor. Leopardface turned to help, but the remaining two newcomers - twin cream-colored she-cats - converged on him.

Stormflower watched in amazement. The movements of these cats were like nothing she had ever seen. The tom and Snowclaw danced like two cobras facing off. They used unknown movements, and once in a while Stormflower would glimpse a flicker of flame. Stormflower was so transfixed. The movements surpassed even Shadestar's, easy.

The russet lunged at Snowclaw's throat. Bruised up and breathing heavy, Snowclaw disappeared in a puff of smoke. Leopardface did likewise.

"Rabbit dung," the russet cursed. He turned to Stormflower, and so did the twins.

He bowed dramatically.

"Flamestrike, at your service."

~

Bluh. This one's also short. I still need to gather up ideas. xD.

****Go check out xxwolfangxx 's AWESOME story Firepool's Wish!!!****

The Beginning

[image]

"Firestrike," Stormfower mewed skeptically. "That's a strange name."

"There's many things I could say to that," the russet tom said, padding over to the twins. "But I'll keep quiet." His eyes were blue as the sky. Stormflower noticed that one cream she-cat's left ear was brown, while the other's right was brown. The first one had green eyes, while the other had amber.

"This is Cloudleap," Firestrike said, pointing to the green-eyed one. "And the other is Squirrelleap." They simply dipped their heads.

"I see." Stormflower still did not quite fully get what had happened.

"What, no 'thank you'?" Firestrike complained teasingly, walking towards her. Stormflower unconsciously took a step back, her tail waving warningly.

The tom stopped, frowning. "We saved you. There is still much to explain, and I see Snowclaw and Leopardface made you more wary to trust others. I-"

"I hope you don't take me for that kind of cat," Stormflower snapped, suddenly a bit hostile. "Don't assume I just plan to cooperate with every cat I meet. That includes you and the she-cats."

Firestrike sat back, holding up two paws innocently. Cloudleap and Squirrelleap stayed where they were, eyes flitting from Firestrike to Stormflower.

"Alright, alright, I get it," Firestrike said. "Just look. Let me explain. . ." Suddenly Stormflower's vision grew foggy, and she stumbled. Looking alarmed and a bit angry, the trio of cats raced towards her. Everyone seemed to be in slow motion for Stormflower.

And suddenly, she was awake.

Stormflower sat up. **(. . . and she realized that the dream lasted a chapter and a half.)** Nobody was in the den. Her head spun dizzily, so she gave her chest fur a couple of licks and exited the warriors' den.

She was shocked. Everyone was assembled around the Leader's Branch. **(Basically the Highrock or Highledge. For newer people, the Leader's Branch is a fallen, sturdy branch in the center of the camp that the leader sits upon to gather the Clan for announcements/ meetings. :P)** Haretail sat under it, flicking his short tail that gave him his name. The warriors Frozengaze, Grasspelt, Canyonclaw, Maplebreeze, Scorchwing, Goldenfur, Appleleap, Redwillow, Gingertail, Nightbreeze, Copperclaw, Petalsprout, Snailfur, Ravencloud, and Softfeather were all gathered. The apprentices Dovepaw, Aspenpaw, and Frostpaw all sat by their mentors Redwillow, Scorchwing, and Canyonclaw, all looking solemn.

Even the queens **(she-cats expecting kits)** Starlingfoot and Sunstorm were out, looking quite worried. Leafpelt the medicine cat and Foxpaw saw beside Haretail. The two elders, Adderfur and Dewtail, peeked outside of their den. **(Plez do not steal any of these original names. Arigatou.)** Shadestar, dark, long-limbed and muscular, sat upon the Branch.

And someone was in the middle. Stormflower hurried over. It seemed like the WindClanners were surrounding a group of cats. The nearest cats, Goldenfur and Copperclaw, greeted Stormflower with subtle dips of the head. She had to crane her neck to see what was happening.

In the center was a RiverClan patrol, led by Icestar herself. Three warriors flanked her, Splashfoot and Reedfeather. The other Stormflower did not recognize. Icestar's tail twitched dangerously, her icy blue eyes as cold as leaf-bare.

"We cannot tolerate this," she was saying. "Your scent is strong and well inside our territory."

"I keep telling you, Icestar," Shadestar mewed, his voice firm. "My cats have not, and never will set foot inside RiverClan. There is no reason to."

"Except to steal our prey!" Splashfoot hissed, her blue-gray tail lashing. Stormflower narrowed her eyes. What was going on?

"Silence," Icestar hissed to her companion. "We don't have a variety of prey, and only RiverClanners know how to catch fish, mouse-brain." She turned back to Shadestar. "The scent is fresh, Shadestar. And unmistakeable. I would expect this clan to have more knowledge of borders."

Immediately indignant yowling and protests broke out among the WindClan cats.

"Lier!"
"More knowledge than you, *fish-eaters. . .*"
"What is she saying?"
"Impossible. None of us are that desperate!"
"Now, where did my food go. . .?"

"Enough!" Shadestar yowled, raising his tail for silence. He looked down at Icestar. His expression suggested that this was all nonsense. "I respect you, Icestar. We should not stir up much trouble with these perilous times, but I shall go investigate."

He turned his strong gaze on Stormflower, who was listening quietly the whole time. "Stormflower, Frozengaze, Canyonclaw, come with me."

* * *

Welp. This one is a bit longer because Termi is finally NOT being lazy. Chapter 4 will come out soon, so keep those claws sharp 'til next time!

Trouble at the RiverClan Camp - Pieces of a Puzzle

[image]

The foursome of cats followed the RiverClanners into their camp.

After departing the WindClan camp, Shadestar and the others had led Icestar and her followers across the moor, avoiding the places that reeked most of dogs. WindClan was constantly kept up-to-date on the dog problem by their most fastest, silent runners, so skirting the possible areas was risky but swift.

Stormflower brought up the rear of the patrol. Frozengaze and Canyonclaw flanked Shadestar on both sides. *Both leaders are here,* Stormflower thought. *Is it really that important?*

They passed the skipping stones onto the pebbly shore, the waves licking hungrily against the smooth pebbles. Icestar entered a path in the shrubs worn well by many paws over many generations.

The RiverClan camp was open to the sky, but the dens were not. Immediately Stormflower felt a sickening sense of claustrophobia. Past the leaders' den you could glimpse the shining surface of the lake, reflecting the sun, now a quarter in the sky.

Stormflower was alarmed at how thin the RiverClan cats seemed. Most could be seen with their ribs poking out. Some talked together, ate together, laughed together, shared tongues together, and overall it seemed like the normal type of air. But there was an undercurrent of desperateness and hostility, like the hunger was eating at them. She did think that Splashfoot, Reedfeather and the stranger all seemed a little thin. Icestar was not well-fed, but not skinny either. Apparently the RiverClanners thought of their leader first.

Icestar told something to the three cats, and they all padded away. The RiverClan leader turned to face the WindClanners.

"I led you here to show you our problem," she said, sweeping her tail around to gesture the cats. "Since leaf-bare is only a couple moons away, prey has gone scarce. The fish have all left for someplace warmer too far downstream, cutting through ThunderClan territory, and at that point all we can do is hope stragglers will show up.

"I saw it on your face, Shadestar. 'Why had Icestar herself come to me?' Well. I will tell you why. I do not need your cats in my territory!" she growled, baring her teeth. "I have enough problems to deal with. Minnowleap is expecting kits soon, in *leaf-bare,* the prey is running low, and I still need to keep--" she ended in a bout of coughing.

Stormflower glanced at Shadestar's face. Obviously Icestar was really angry. As expected of her brilliant leader, his face wore a calm expression. Who knew what was going on inside his head.

Canyonclaw reached out to steady Icestar, but the white she-cat smacked his paw away, bristling. "I do not need aid of another Clan cat."

The russet tom respectfully withdrew.

"Now that you have needlessly shown us your personal issue," Shadestar said. "Lead us to the spot where you supposedly scented our cats. Let us depart in peace afterwards."

Icestar held his gaze for a moment. "Stay here," she rasped, and padded away. A moment later a handsome black tom with white socks and amber eyes approached them, and dipped his head. "I apologize for the trouble," he said, his voice regal and respectful. "I am Moonfoot, the deputy of this clan, and will be your escort tonight."

. . .

Icestar must really trust him a lot for him to come alone, Stormflower thought as Moonfoot led them back towards the border, but at a slanted angle this time.

"I see RiverClan is not doing very well," Shadestar commented

casually. "I do hope you find food soon. Maybe I can send some over for the season."

"Hey," Frozengaze murmured. Canyonclaw flicked his ear at the comment. "I don't think you should be doing this."

"I appreciate it," Moonfoot said without looking back or slowing. "But RiverClan does not need your charity. It will make us look weak in the eyes of the other Clans, including yours. Though I cannot say the same for the other cats. They may welcome the idea of food."

After that, nobody spoke for a while until they reached the spot. It was a patch of muddy, churned up ground surrounded by ferns and trees. It was well inside RiverClan territory alright, and Stormflower was shocked at how fresh the scent was. "This is impossible!" she exclaimed, tail waving amiably. "How can it be so deep inside?"

"We found out just this morning," Moonfoot said. "I was one of the few who found it. It's strange, though; only this patch of land has your scent. It has no trails."

Shadestar went forward, wide paws sinking in the mud. He sniffed the air, eyes narrowed into tiny slits. "This is our scent alright."

Frozengaze and Canyonclaw both fidgeted uncomfortably, ears twitching. Stormflower lowered her ears. "How can that be?"

"Did you see their faces?" Shadestar asked, turning to Moonfoot.

"I did not," Moonfoot said. "But another of our patrol members, Fernspeckle, did."

"Tell us," Canyonclaw said. "None of our members are that stupid as to be seen."

"The first one was a white she-cat with long fur," Moonfoot conveyed. "And the second a muscular ginger tom with a spotted pelt. Fernspeckle claims they were running fast, and hard, both smelling of the wind and the grass. She barely had time to catch their appearances."

Stormflower felt like she had been hit by a monster. **(The Clan cats use the term "monsters" to describe human, or TwoLeg, cars.)** She recognized those descriptions.

It was Snowclaw and Leopardface, and they were both looking for her.

* * *

Whoop. Chapter 4 = done. Finally. I decided I will be updating this story every week. Friday, probably. If not, Saturday. I hope this is still intresting and keeping you hooked... if you have any feedback or advice, PLEZZZZ DEAR STARCLAN let me know! I appreciate anything you awesome peeps tell me.

Keep those claws sharp as always, and until the next scent post. (<-- don't worry about it. Wolves of the Beyond reference)

~Termi-chan

Dog's Claws and Shadow's Blur

[image]

Upon returning to WindClan, Stormflower was eating a thrush, quietly pulling out the feathers of the bird.

After hearing it was Snowclaw and Leopardface and returning to the RiverClan camp with Moonfoot, Shadestar had insisted he did not know who both those cats were, and that it was unusual altogether to not leave a trace. After a heated argument between Icestar and Shadestar, the leaders had finally come to a conclusion that it was some kind of Dark Forest or StarClan work, though no cat knew if the Dark Forest was still alive.

Right now everyone was whispering about what had happened, and Shadestar, Leafpelt, and Haretail were all conversing on the matter. Stormflower finished her thrush and swept the bones in a nearby bush. The trip to RiverClan had taken a little over half the day, and the open sk above was a very beautiful pink-red, a few clouds skimming the surface. Stars speckled far to the east.

"This will be the last sunset for a while," a voice beside Stormflower said.

Jumping slightly, Stormflower turned to see Sunstorm the queen sitting beside her, licking a paw. The golden tabby was two moons pregnant, and was expecting to bear her kits somewhere in the late leafbare. Sunstorm turned he amber eyes to Stormflower.

"Hello Sunstorm," Stormflower greeted. "I suppose WindClan should enjoy this sunset then."

Sunstorm nodded, turning her head to the sky. "I overheard Leaftail in the leaders' den, before I came to you. She was saying how those two cats mentioned on the patrol had been appearing once or twice in her visions, and how they might be significant to our clan."

There you have it, Stormflower thought forlornly. *Snowclaw and Leopardface each play an important role in our fates, straight from the medicine cat.*

"It was so strange, Sunstorm," Stormflower said. "You should've been there! It-it was so unnatural. Only one patch of grass was affected. Nothing else. No trace. No nothing."

Sunstorm rested her tail on Stormflower's shoulder. She rubbed her swollen belly, smiling sadly. "Times are changing, Stormflower. And my kits will unfortunately be here to witness it." She sighed. "It is weird indeed. But don't worry, our leader will figure something out. I have faith in him and everyone in WindClan. We will survive this."

Stormflower tried to believe her. It sounded like the tabby queen was just as concerned as she was. Stormflower rose, looking at Sunstorm. "Thank you, Sunstorm. I appreciate it, really. We could all use some reassurance. And don't worry." Her tone turned serious. "WindClan will do whatever it takes to protect your and Starlingfoot's kits. They are our future generation! *Nothing* will harm them."

The tabby's smile grew more natural and sincere. "Fluff-brain. Think I don't know that?" she chided softly. "You young cats are too persistent! That's how Gingertail caught my eye."

Stormflower laughed. "You sound like an elder! I'll see you later, Sunstorm. Take care." She padded away from the queen, and towards the entrance. She could use some fresh air to clear her mind, but she couldn't bother Haretail to tell him she was going.

Stormflower pushed through the entrance and picked up the pace along the dirt trail. The wind swept her fur, making the moor shimmer like green glass.

She stretched her legs before breaking into a full run through the moor, not caring if she startled prey. Stormflower could feel her muscles churning on her shoulders and flanks, and she relished it.

Now she had a clear view of the sun sinking below the mountains on the horizon. Cutting through the grass, Stormflower raced along

at a leisurely pace.

Suddenly, to her right, barking sounded. Stormflower skidded to her halt and made the mistake of looking over the crest of the hill. The farm-place was down there! How had she not noticed that! And worse, three furry black-and-white dogs were running towards her, pink tongues lolling.

Fox dung, fox dung, fox dung! Stormflower thought as she turned and raced in the other direction. The dog reports had been minimal for a while, but now this would be one of them. She had to lead them away from camp. An image of Sunstorm and Starlingfoot flashed through her mind, a promise she had made just recently.

Stormflower glanced back, the wind whipping fiercely against her. The lead dog was gaining, froth foaming at its lip. They barked, and barked again. And again. And again. It was the worst sound Stormflower had heard.

She could sense the ShadowClan border drawing nearer. Stormflower pounded harder ahead, veering to her left. It was a good thing she was built for speed.

The chasing went on for a few minuted before the dogs finally began to flag. Stormflower slowed a little, confident that they would not catch up. Instead, they increased their sped once they saw her slow.

This is getting me nowhere! Stormflower turned and leapt at the dogs, yowling and stretching her claws out. The dogs were slow to react, and she landed on the leader's face, hissing and raking her claws against its eyes. It snapped and whined, shaking its head and walking backwards.

Stormflower yelped as something grabbed her tail and yanked her to the ground. She stared up at bloodthirsty eyes. The dog's lips were pulled back, saliva gleaming. Its tail was wagging so much it was practically shaking. Stormflower growled and slashed her claws at its nose, but it pulled away.

This was dumb. She was outnumbered! Why didn't she run away?

Stormflower scrambled to her feet.

Just then, something burst from the grass around them. One dog was knocked to the ground, eyes rolled back and throat slit open. The other dogs' heads were smacked, so they ran with their tails between their legs.

A shadow cat stood over the dead dog, one paw on its neck. Stormflower gasped in surprise. It was the most purest black she had ever seen, even against the fading sunlight. Its eyes were electric blue, the pupils white. It gazed at Stormflower, and she thought it was very unnerving.

"Thank you for saving me from the dogs," Stormflower said tentatively. The shadow cat looked at her for a moment longer, then whisked back the way it had come.

Stormflower stood there for a moment. Then, she did not feel sad that he was gone, she felt angry. Sunstorm was right. Times are changing, and fast. What was happening? First she was pulled into a nebulae cave, met two cats who leave no scent, three more cats who could cut a rift in stars, and finally a mysterious cat who looked to be made from pure shadow.

Stormflower turned, and headed back, ignoring the corpse of the dog. She needed answers.

* * *

This took longer than the others :3. Great, another cliffhanger. Does this count as a cliffhanger? They're basically in every one of my chapters so far XD. You're welcome.

Keep your claws sharp for next week!
~Termi

Answers

[image]

Just a quick note before we begin, xxwolfangxx I am so sorry X'D

* * *

Walking back to WindClan, Stormflower encountered a patrol consisting of Redwillow and Goldenfur.

"Haretail told us to fetch you," Goldenfur had said. "But when I found you weren't in camp, we were sent out here. By the way, you reek of dogs."

Now Stormflower and the two cats were heading back to WindClan, and she could smell the entrance up ahead. Her mind was whirling, images of the shadow and the dead dog flashing.

The trio ducked past the barrier into camp. With the sun almost down, the camp was mostly empty except for a few cats sharing tongues and talking and the apprentices playing outside, a couple mentors watching.

Stormflower looked up. The semi-dark starry sky suddenly reminded her of the Nebulae Cave, and she shuddered from the thought.

"I know it's late to ask," Stormflower said. "But why was Haretail looking for me?"

Redwillow turned. "Well, after the meeting with Shadestar and Leaftail, he was the only one to come out, and he looked very serious and concerned. I was watching him, and the first thing he did was go to the nearest cat, Goldenfur, and speak with her. Then you know what happened after that."

Stormflower frowned. What could be so important as for Haretail to

act that way? Sure, Haretail was always very serious and committed on certain occasions, but most of the time he was a funny, careful tom. It must be one of those times.

"So in other words, you don't know," Stormflower checked.

"Right," Redwillow said.

Redwillow and Goldenfur led Stormflower to Shadestar's den, passing the Branch to a little underground entrance. Whenever she saw this, Stormflower always thought of rabbits, but it was nothing like a rabit den. Once you were inside, the interior walls turned to stone and branched out in three different tunnels, all leading who-knows-where.

"Well, good luck," Goldenfur said. "I hope you come out in one piece!"

She purred before leaving with Redwillow. Stormflower wondered if they were even worried about her at all. She turned and slithered down through the entrace, scraping the dusty sides. Inside, a light through the hole in the ceiling underneath the Branch shone on three cats: Shadestar, Leaftail, and Haretail. Leaftail was small tortiseshell she-cat with a stubby but fluffy tail. She had one torn ear and amber eyes. Haretail the deputy was a white tom with two brown spots on one flank and a blue gaze.

"Stormflower," Haretail greeted. "Where were you?"

"I was out," Stormflower said.

Shadestar crinkled his nose. "I can smell a whiff of dog on you. So you met some?"

"Yes, I did," Stormflower said. She supposed it was unwise to hide anything in front of her leader. "They chased me, but a shadow cat came and slew one of them, and the rest ran away."

Leaftail's eyes grew wide. She shook her head solemnly. "Just as I thought. There is no doubts anymore."

"What? Doubts? What do you mean?" Stormflower asked, her sense

of dread increasing.

Shadestar sighed, and patted the space next to him with one dark paw. "Come. We have much to talk about." Stormflower came and sat beside him, curling her tail around her paws.

"I want answers," Stormflower demanded.

"First," Leaftail said, resting her blotched tail on Stormflower's shoulders. "Tell us everything you have experienced these past few days. Then we will compare. We're aware of what is going on."

Stormflower considered this offer in her head for a minute. She was suddenly very wary of the three cats around her, but felt gulity after it and decided to oblige. She told them about her dream and the five figures she had met during it, her deduction of the RiverClan-WindClan patch of land being Snowclaw and Leopardface, and the story about the dogs in detail this time.

Shadestar, Haretail, and Leaftail were all very good listeners. They only asked minor questions every now and then, but usually kept quiet and heard her story.

After, Leaftail the medicine cat flicked her ears. "I won't tell you everything, Stormflower, because this knowledge may or may not endanger you further." Stormflower didn't like how she said *further*. Leaftail took a deep breath. "StarClan visited me a few nights ago, and delivered a prophecy. I cannot share it with you yet, because the night gives oppurtunities to many entities. I haven't told this to Foxpaw yet either, who is currently sleeping in his nest, but I intend to as well. As far as I can conclude the prophecy hints that maybe you might be part of it. I'm confident that's right, which is why I chose to share it with you instead of mulling over it and finding more evidence. But as I saw you wake up later than most, and Icestar arrived at the camp the morning after I received the prophecy, I knew somehow that these events were connected, and merely no coincidence. In all my moons of being medicine cat, I have not even gotten minor prophecies from StarClan, so I assume that this will be one big ride."

Haretail turned to Stormflower, a hint of sympathy in his gaze and

tone. "Directly after hearing the prophecy, Leaftail chose to share it with Shadestar and even I. We were surprised when we heard that she might think it's you, and also devastated to learn it was one of our own, in WindClan."

Stormflower barely even heard him. *They* were devastated? She was the subject of a prophecy! Stormflower had heard tales of heroic cats in all Clans and had liked them when she was a kit, but never imagined she would become one, less likely heroic. One nursery tale was that of Stormbringer, the "cat" she was supposedly named after, who was the harbringer of a storm that washed away enemy lives, but Stormflower was just a flower in the storm. And those don't last long.

The Prophecy - A Flower in the Storm

[image]

Thank you for 70+ views, I really appreciate it, and hope more will come in soon! <3

* * *

"That's not possible," Stormflower said, shaking her head. "I'm an average cat in WindClan. There is absolutely no way. In all the pasts of the Clans, ThunderClan has always held the most prophecies. Perhaps StarClan mistook you for the ThunderClan medicine cat, he's a tortiseshell too."

"I don't think that's likely," Leafpelt said, swishing her tail as much as a little stump could. "The StarClan member who gave me the prophecy was our former deputy, Snakespot. It would make so sense if you were right."

Shadestar nodded, looking down at the space between his paws. "I believe this prophecy is true and sincere." His gaze flicked to Stormflower, looking into her eyes, and for once Stormflower saw a hint of fear and desperation behind those eyes who always held a strong, confident air. She was surprised, and didn't know what to say.

"If it is," Stormflower said, "then what am I supposed to do?"

"We'll talk about that more in the morning, so I can also share the prophecy with you," Leaftail answered. "We gave you a lot to think about, so go and get some rest." She smiled kindly.

"Dismissed," Shadestar added. Stormflower nodded, deeply disturbed, and climbed back up the entrance. It was now early nighttime, and all the cats have gone to bed. It was quiet, the now clear sky revealing a pathway of stars known as Silverpelt. **(Imagine the milky way, that's basically what Silverpelt is.)** The

moon waxed and waned, giving the open camp a sort of silver hue.

Thinking hard, Stormflower turned and walked past the Branch, towards the warriors' den. She wondered what the three cats she had just conversed with were talking about now. Perhaps they were going to sleep, or were they speaking about something entirely different?

Stormflower entered the warriors' den, carefully and silently stepping ovr the sleeping warriors. She soon found her nest at the back of the den, flanked by Softfeather and Maplebreeze. Stormflower circled twice and settled down, curling her striped tail over her nose. Mind whirling, she closed her eyes, and sleep soon found her despite her worrying.

* * *

Thankfully, Stormflower's sleep had been dreamless. She would not have been surprised if Firestrike showed up, battling a whole pack of dream wolves single-handedly.

Yawning, the silver she-cat sat the edge of the warriors' den. It was early, the sky streaked with pink-tinted clouds. Stormflower always thought it was one of the most beautful times of day. Most of the warriors were gone, only Grasspelt the gray tom and Scorchwing the white-and-ginger tom were asleep, Scorchwing's apprentice Aspenpaw complaining loudly and trying to prod him awake.

Speaking of apprentices, Stormflower wondered, *I would really like one. Perhaps one of Starlingfoot or Sunstorm's kits will be the one!* Stormflower purred. The events of yesterday were still hovering around her, but she was trying to cheer herself up. The camp was very lively today, so she didn't think that would be a problem. Only when she spotted Leafpelt or Shadestar did she become cautious.

Ravencloud, a sleek black tom with a white underbelly and socks padded up to her. His heterochromic eyes, one blue and the other green, looked warm and welcoming. "Good morning, Stormflower," Ravencloud greeted.

"'Morning, Ravencloud," Stormflower replied. They both turned to

watch the dawn patrol leave, consisting of Frozengaze, Grasspelt, Redwillow and his apprentice Frostpaw.

Ravencloud settled down beside her, yawning and giving his chest fur a couple of licks. "The Gathering is this moon. I hope I go. It's always fun to see cats from other Clans."

When they aren't trying to claw your eyes off, Stormflower thought. *Though they'll be just as happy to do that at the Gathering as well.* "Yeah. I hope I do, too. I'm curious to see how Icestar is going to speak about the incident."

Ravencloud *mrrowed* with pleasure. "I'd sure like to see the look the other leaders' faces! They'd surely-"

Suddenly, a sharp prod in Stormflower's side made her yelp. She whipped around to see Foxpaw, then relaxed a little. The little tom was always good at concealing his prescence. The auburn cat looked frantic, his amber eyes wide. "Leafpelt..," he murmured, and that was enough for Stormflower to understand.

She turned to Ravencloud sympathetically. "I'm sorry, Ravencloud! I have to go, important matters!" She raced across the camp after Foxpaw, not leaving the back tom any time to respond.

The two cats reached the medicine cat den; a wide cave-like structure with a dent in the side, where Foxpaw's nest resides. Vines hung over the camp entrance, concealing it from view. Foxpaw and Stormflower pushed inside. Shelves and shelves of herbs lined both walls, and more were piled below the shelves and in the back of the den.

They went towards the back, where Leafpelt was on her side, breathing sharply and shallowly, eyes closed and body spasming mildly. Shadestar crouched beside her, his dark fur bristling, his tail lashing right and left. Foxpaw dipped his head hurriedly and scampered out. Haretail was guarding the entrance.

Leafpelt opened her eyes, looking at Stormflower. "I... please, be patient. I-I am receiving... the rest of the prophecy," she panted. Her claws dug into the soil.

"Take your time," Stormflower murmured, crouching beside the medicine cat and licking her fur encouragingly. **(It isn't uncommon for warrior cats, or any cat in particular, to do that. Cats lick each other to encourage, awknowledge, greet, etc.)**

Leafpelt gasped, her eyes widening, a strange glaze covering them. Her whole body went still. Stormflower and Shadestar waited silently, and the whole world seemed to be holding its breath.

"From those who possess the Object's calling,
blood will spill like a river of fire.

The roots of the Clans shake and crumble,
leaving one who seems to be falling.

An impending avalanche awaits.
The time of the Clans are over."

Leafpelt's eyes returned to normal, although she lapsed into unconsciousness, which Stormflower wasn't surprised after receiving such a large prophecy. Stormflower and Shadestar locked eyes.

"That's it," Shadestar murmured. "It's official."

"No it's not!" Stormflower blurted, "you said the prophecy might suggest involving me. None of those lines depict anything."

"That's because StarClan gave her a more minor prophecy," Shadestar hissed impatiently. "And from the looks of it, it involves one cat from each Clan."

"No...," Stormflower muttered. She returned her gaze to Leafpelt, who was sleeping peacefully. What had just happened? The Object's calling? Too much was going on.

"Shadestar, will you mention this at the next Gathering?" Stormflower inquired.

"I will speak with the leaders in private, but I will reveal nothing more than the prophecy lines," Shadestar said. He sat up and curled his tail over his wide paws. Stormflower noticed that his claws were

unsheathed. The leader and medicine cat always had close bonds, it must've been hard seeing Leafpelt like that.

An idea came to Stormflower. "Tonight," she said, "I will call for Firestrike in my dreams. If he comes, I can ask him about what's going on."

Shadestar glanced at her. "Do what you must," he meowed. "You have fulfilled your duty here. I will discuss this with Leafpelt. You are dismissed."

Stormflower nodded, and exited the medicine cat den, relieved to breathe freh air and be away from the two cats. She nodded to Haretail, who returned the greeting, and padded away. Ravencloud was no longer beside the warriors' den. Stormflower hoped no one had overheard them. WindClan had enough to worry about.

Perhaps the flower in the storm was becoming a little more resistant.

* * *

Welp.

Keep your claws sharp for next weekend!
~Termi

Valiant

[image]

During the rest of the day, Stormflower went on a hunting patrol, played with the apprentices, and watched them train. All the while the prophecy nagged at the back of her mind. She couldn't get it out of her head!

Now it was late in the night. Stormflower was in her nest, curled up in a tight ball. Despite the warmth of the moss around her, the leafbare winds blew in gently from the warriors' den entrance. Stormflower couldn't imagine how cold it was when it started to snow. She had stayed awake for a while. But now, she was getting used to the cold, and sleep soon overcame her.

Stormflower opened her eyes and found herself standing atop a grassy hill that sloped downward out into a valley. Pine trees fringed the valley behind Stormflower and in the distance. Towards the horizon were purple snow-capped mountains. The sky was red and orange, the sun peaking over the mountains. A soft breeze blew, ruffling Stormflower's whiskers.

Am I in StarClan? Stormflower looked down and saw that her paws were not speckled with stars, like StarClan cats. Stormflower began padding down the hill, enjoying the peace. For a while she listened to nothing but the trees and the wind blowing. There was no birdsong or scurrying. As she was nearing the trees, an orange-brown flash caught her off guard, and she stood frozen. *He's here.*

Firestrike, the russet tom with green eyes and a white underbelly, emerged from the bushes, looking dangerous. His expression lessened when he saw Stormflower.

"Hey, it's you!" Firestrike meowed, bounding up to her. "What are you doing here?"

"Hello Firestrike," Stormflower greeted. "I wanted to see you. It's convenient we saw each other here."

Firestrike shook his head. "I guess you wanted to see me, that's why it sent you here. See, this is my ideal land. It stays dusk forever, the same goes for the greenness of the trees and grass and the breeze. Only cats who wish to see me are taken here."

"And I *did* want to see you," Stormflower said. Her expression became more serious. "Firestrike, I've heard the prophecy. And I want to know who Leopardface and Snowclaw really are, and what they want with me. Everything. I'm sorry I didn't thank you the first time we met."

Firestrike flicked his tail thoughtfully. "Ah, so the baby bird is leaving the nest. Taint has been wanting to meet you and the other three for some time now."

"Taint? The other three?" Stormflower knew 'the other three' must be the other paticipants of the prophecy, but in reality it could mean anyone.

"You're a WindClan cat, right?" Firestrike questioned, ignoring her inquires.

"Yes."
"Then you should be able to keep up."
"Huh?"

Without warning, Firestrike turned and raced off, so fast his back paws churned up a few chunks of soil. Stormflower smirked, accepting this challange, and raced after him, putting on full speed. She allowed her smell sense to open up, and followed Firestrike's alluring scent.

Before long Stormflower was only a tail-length behind Firestrike, the forest a blur bside them, jumping, ducking, and avoiding obstacles. Stormflower was careful to follow Firestrike's path, because she was not familiar with this phony forest. She was beginning to run out of steam.

"We're almost there," Firestrike called over his shoulder. *There? Where is he leading me to?*

The trees gave way to a beautiful view of the sunset. Stormflower had a fraction of a second to realize; they were no longer on land. Firestrike had jumped right off a cliff, and was now soaring through the air, dipping down towards a river. And Stormflower was right behind him! She yowled in surprise and fear as the river raidly drew near. But Firestrike seemed so sure, so calm, like this was the right way to go. So she tried to follow his examply and clamped her jaws shut.

They splashed into the river with force, and Stormflower was afraid that they would drown. She closed her eyes. Then Stormflower felt like she was being turned upside down, and the sensation flipped to where it felt right. The silver she-cat surfaced, gasping for air and opening her eyes. They were in a completely different place, in a ravine, the cliff walls soaring high. The water was crisp and chilly. Something grabbed her scruff and hauled her onto the pebbly shore. It was Firestrike. She sat upright and coughed, but Stormflower didn't feel wet at all. She looked at Firestrike and found that he was dry as well.

Behind him was a bramble tunnel, sloping upwards. "That was weird," Stormflower coughed, which earned a chuckle from Firestrike as he turned and led her into the tunnel.

Stormflower wriggled in after him, the brambles tugging at her fur. It felt so weird, it was like this wasn't a dream at all. Although she knew it was basically both her's and Firestrike's spirits traveling.

The tunnel led upwards, then on flat ground, which continued for a few silent minutes. Firestrike finally exited the tunnel, stepping to the sdie for Stormflower, who emerged beside Firestrike, staring out at a place she had never seen before.

In a big clearing, there were old twoleg monsters around the ridge, and weird twoleg boxes that smelled like their kind of food. 'Food stalls' was the right word. There was a stack of pipes in one corner and a stack of logs in the other. In the middle was a kind of rundown obelisk that held a black stone in the pointy part.

Firestrike turned to her, a proud spark in his fiery green eyes. "Welcome to Onyx Lock, home of *Valiant*."

At the mention, Stormflower could discern cats in the Lock. Some were hanging on top of or inside the food stalls. One could be seen laying on top of a monster, tail tip flicking. Some were inside the metal pipes, but none were on the logs. Most of the cats were either in the food stalls or hanging around the obelisk. Two big piles of prey lay on either side of the stone obelisk.

"Wow...," Stormflower breathed. She turned to Firestrike excitedly. "Tell me about *Valiant.* What is it exactly?"

Firestrike looked out over the clearing, a tiny smile on his face. "I've been a member of *Valiant* for a long time now. It's an organization of super elite cats from who-knows-where. We have a long history with the Clans, especially WindClan, because they are both fast and strong, which we prefer among our cats. Some of our history is bloody, most of it is good. It sort of functions like the four Clans, except that there's very little members, because it's so hard to create elite cats. We've tried before, but it mostly ended in tragedy. Right now, there's ten members, including our leader. You'e going to wake up soon, so I will only tell you their names, okay?" he flicked an ear. "Sorry, that's a really brief explanation of *Valiant.* Its ac-" he had turned to Stormflower and was now staring at her strangely.

"What? What is it? Do I have ants in my pelt or something?" Stormflower blinked and craned her neck to look over her back.

Firestrike laughed. "No, no. You're fine. It's just... you had a really fascinated look in your eyes, and your mouth was kinda open, and I just thought 'Wow, I wonder what she would look like if she heard the whole story on *Valiant*'."

"Well, I'd certainly be amazed," Stormflower said. "It just feels so *surreal*... like I'm in one era one moment and a completely different one the next. Sunstorm said times were changing, nd she was spot on. So many things are different now... it makes me feel all sorts of ways: heartache, sadness, confusion, but also a new sense of joy and belonging, y'know?"

"Yes, I understand perfectly what you mean," Firestrike said sincerely. "Time is fleeting. Everything is fleeting. That's why you

just have to enjoy the moment while it lasts, or make the most of it, whether it be bad or good. Bluh! I'm babbling away. Now, let me tell you our members. You already met two more of them. Taint is the leader. There is no second in command. There's me, Cloudleap, Squirrelleap, Scylla, Toxic-tear, Bumblewing, Feather, Wolf, and Fox."

"Some of them sound like kittypets, or rogues," Stormflower commented nervously.

"They aren't any of those," Firestrike promised. "True, some of us may be Clan cats, or exiles at the least, but we all come from somewhere. Some changed their names. But I swear, we're all good people. And we're *your* allies."

His blazing green eyes made Stormflower feel sad despite the good news. She knew it would never be the same from here on out. She wouldn't be able to play with the apprentices or future kits the same. She would never see the outside world as it once was to her. She would lose some important cats in her life. And one day Stormflower might even look back on this time and laugh at her once-thoughts. Stormflower closed her eyes, and pushed those thoughts away. She would enjoy this moment like Firestrike did, and enjoy the moment she did.

* * *

In this chapter Stormflower was kinda sharing her feelings a little more than in the others, but there's many more feels to come mmmm yesss. Be prepared my children and keep the claws sharp for next time!

~ Termi

The Gathering

So, sorry this took so long. Basically all my chapters take forever XD.

* * *

Stormflower walked alongside Scorchwing and Nightbreeze, padding on the pebbly shore of the lake. Tonight was the Gathering. It was a crisp, cloudless night, with a full shining moon and Silverpelt twinkling above. They were skirting the lake all around to were the Great Rock was visible from the shore. Right now they were leaving RiverClan territory and entering ThunderClan territory.

The group consisted of Shadestar, Haretail, Leafpelt, Stormflower, the three apprentices and their mentors, and Appleleap.

After a while, they reached the base of the fallen oak tree that bridged the lake to the Great Rock island without incident. But a yowl behind them told them they had visitors. Stormflower turned and saw the ShadowClan patrol, led by Miststar, whose smoky gray coat looked silver in the moonlight. He trained his blue eyes on Shadestar.

Shadestar stepped back, signaling with his tail for the others to do the same. "After you, Miststar."

A smug gleam in his eyes, Miststar trotted past the WindClan cats and leapt onto the trunk of the oak, leading his cats across. However, Stormflower noticed, a dark tom with a white swirling mark on his flank trailed behind. Whenever he'd try to get close to the group, some cat would hiss at him or swipe at him with sheathed claws.

Stormflower narrowed her eyes. As soon as the ShadowClanners passed, Shadestar turned to face his cats. "Remember what I always tell you at the Gathering. Do not start fights, even if they insult you or your Clanmates, and even if starved, hold your head high and

proud, because we are WindClanners!" A chorus of yowls and meows responded, Stormflower included. Shadestar glanced at Stormflower, then leapt up onto the trunk. *I know, I know,* Stormflower thought, *keep quiet about the stupid prophecy.*

She waited until all the cats had passed, then jumped up after Redwillow and Dovepaw. The little black-and-white harlequin apprentice was pouncing around on the oak, excited at her first Gathering, while her mentor scolded her every five seconds.

Her paw slipped and she scrambled for a foothold as she slowly toppled towards the dark water. With a pang of alarm, Stormflower and Redwillow leapt for the young cat, but Stormflower was quicker. She grabbed Dovepaw's scruff with a firm grip and hauled her back up, grunting. Dovepaw shook her fur, but only her tail tip was wet. She turned to Redwillow and Stormflower with a guilty look, ears back. "I'm sorry, Redwillow!"

Redwillow snorted. "Be more careful, you mousebrain. Place your paws more firmly on the bark, or you'll taste the wrath of the water." Dovepaw's eyes widened at the last comment. Stormflower laughed. She had done the exact same thing when she was an apprentice. Her mentor had been Sunstorm at the time, which was one reason why they were so friendly with each other.

Upon reaching the other side, Stormflower could smell the strong scent of the Clans. They were the last ones to arrive. Huge, tall trees surrounded the clearing with the Rock, and she could hear mews and talking up ahead.

Shadestar arrived with his tail raised high. Heads turned to look at them. Shadestar gave a triumphant yowl, echoed by his followers. They raced down the slope towards the Great Rock, which was a huge, flat and wide boulder placed in the back. Flattened grass surrounded it, hinting that generations of Clan cats have trampled upon it.

The Clan cats slowed, and Shadestar and Haretail strutted towards the Rock. The three leaders were all sitting on it already, so Shadestar bunched up his wiry muscles and leapt onto the rock, setting beside Icestar. Haretail joined the deputies at the foot of the

rock, exchanging greetings. It looked like they still had a little time, because the four leaders suddenly started conversing. The WindClan cats dispersed.

Stormflower stood about awkwardly, not knowing what to do. Then, an idea came to her mind. She looked around, picking out the ShadowClan scent. Then she saw him: the dark tom with the swirly mark, sitting at the edge of the crowd.

She weaved through the crowd towards him. As she approahced she noticed that he looked quite handsome and refined, and about her age, maybe older. He had a chiseled face, longish dark but not really black fur, and a distorted whte swirl marking on his flank. He turned his face to look at her with dark green eyes.

Suddenly nervous, Stormflower crept towards him and sat down a pace away. After an awkward silence, the tom said, "What do you want, Clan cat?"

She swallowed. "Well, I.. uh... just noticed you were sitting all alone, and I saw you at the base of the oak tree... and how you were being treated... so I guess I came to say hello."

The tom snorted in disgust. "This is why I want to stay home every Gathering, this always happens," he muttered. "If you're trying to flirt, just know I have no interest in love." He stood to walk away.

"Wh-wha?!" Stormflower stammered as he padded away. *What a jerk!* She was about to go storm after him and tell him off, but a cry interrupted her thoughts. She turned to see Hollystar of ThunderClan standing straight in her place, tail waving low. "The Gathering has begun!"

Stormflower was surprised to see Hollystar look deeply disturbed despite her strong voice. "I shall report first. ThunderClan is doing well. There is plently of prey, and one of our apprentices, Petalpaw, has become Petalwhisker!" Name chants followed. "That is all I have to say." She glanced over her shoulder at Miststar and backed up.

Miststar stood up, gaze sweeping the cats. An ear twitched. "I am proud to say that ShadowClan is doing good as well. We are

currently stocking up for leafbare, as I expect everyone is. We have had some traces of badger in our teritory, but it was faint. I believe they are well gone now."

Icestar took her place. "RiverClan is not doing as well as ThunderClan or ShadowClan. The fish in our territory have all moved upstream from the cold, and we are struggling to find other prey." Her voice was bitter. Meows and hisses rose up from the RiverClan cats. The other Clans murmured amongst themselves. "But! Do not underestimate us, we are still strong and always ready to fight!" A chorus of yowls. Someone yelled out, "As strong as a pack of rabbits!"

Icestar lashed her tail defiantly and hissed. "Keep your mouth shut, coward, or you will find out how us 'rabbits' really fight." With that, she turned and stalked to her place. Taunts were thrown at each other among the RiverClanners and other Clans.

Finally, Stormflower thought, ignoring the commotion. *It's Shadestar's turn. What will he say, I wonder?*

She saw him take a deep breath and stand up, raising his tail for silence. "WindClan has plenty of prey. We're dealing with a dog problem in our territory, but just as RiverClan is, we're always ready to fight." There was approving mutters among the Clans. "However, that is the least of our problem. Just a few nights ago, our medicine cat Leafpelt received a prophecy."

This was when real chaos erupted. Yowls, murmurs, cats jumping up in surprise, faces of shock and disbelief. The leaders made no move to quiet them down, since they too were rattled. Stormflower saw the group of medicine cats talking, their heads together. A few paces from the medicine cats, Stormflower watched as Canyonclaw drew Frostpaw close protectively, his gaze hard and unreadable, staring up at Shadestar. Frostpaw gave him a wide-eyed, worried look. Stormflower felt a sharp pang of guilt.

Stormflower looked up. The sky was still clear. *So it's true. But... Shadestar said he'd only speak with the leaders. What does he plan to do? What happened?*

Several minutes passed before the raucus died down, though there were still side conversations and quiet murmuring. Shadestar's voice rose above the others'. "Do not panic! I know there has never been a prophecy within this generation, and StarClan has given us no hints to why they know this, but WindClan especially has acquired important information. And, working with the other leaders, we have deciphered who is participating in the prophecy, and it is definite."

* * *

So I thought I had way too many chapters in this book already, and that it was kinda going at a slow pace, so I decided to speed things up a bit. I didn't plan on them announcing it at the Gathering, but whatevs! Time to get this thing started.

Just for your sake, xxwolfangxx , I'll upload another chapter this weekend, since I didn't last weekend. Becuz I'm a butt

The Four

[image]

Picture of Pineleaf :3 - All rights belong to River Spirit! She's an amazing artist.

* * *

They found out that quick? A surge of excitement and anxiety ran through Stormflower, and she felt her fur rise. The group exploded in shocked voices. Cats gave each other suspicious glances.

"Quiet!" Shadestar called, his voice rang out among the assembled cats. The noise lowered reluctantly. "Each of us will call up our participant, so please act like Clan cats and be respectful. I'm sure none of them wish for this to happening as much as you." His gaze rested on Stormflower, and she felt a flicker of fear and annoyance. "Stormflower of WindClan, come up."

As Stormflower hesitantly got up and slunk towards the Rock, she felt the gaze of every pair of eyes on her. Murmurs threaded throughout the cats.

"She doesn't look too happy..."
"That she-cat is so young! How tragic..."
"I wonder who's next..."
"Look at Shadestar, acting all high and mighty..."

The cats parted somewhat for Stormflower to weave through, and stopped in front of the group of deputies. Haretail avoided her gaze, but she could tell he was in pain.

Icestar appeared beside Shadestar. "Duskfang of RiverClan, take your place next to the she-cat." Her voice was strained. A small, skinny cat padded up to Stormflower. She looked scared, with a dusky gray-brown coat with white spots along her forehead, spine, and tail. Her eyes were blue. Without a word, Duskfang sat down beside Stormflower, trembling slightly and looking at the ground.

Poor thing, Stormflower thought.

"Darkpool of ShadeClan, step up," Miststar said. To Stormflower's astonishment, the one called Darkpool was the tom with the swirly mark. He gave her a scowl and settled down a few steps away from her.

Hollystar flicked her tail. After a few heartbeats, she declared her participant. "Pineleaf of ThunderClan, you have been chosen. Join your comrades at the base of the Great Rock." Stormflower turned to see a large tom walking towards them.
He had interesting patterns over his body, and his fur was different. It was light brown on top, with darker brown covering some of his face, chest, underbelly, and tail. One foreleg from the toes to the shoulder was completely dark brown. Black stripes and spots wove throughout his fur. Pineleaf's eyes were blazing amber, with flecks of gold. He had a dangerous and mysterious air around him, but he seemed overall quite handsome.

"We have now assembled the four cats of the prophecy," Hollystar announced. "One from each Clan. Tomorrow morning, the four will assemble here for a meeting on what to do next. This Gathering is over!" With that, she turned an leapt off the Rock, followed by the others. Conversations broke out among the felines as the groups broke off to join with their leaders. Duskfang gave Stormflower a shy glance before sprinting away. By the time Stormflower got up, Pineleaf and Darkpool had already gone.

Haretail padded towards Stormflower, and the two of them made their way towards Shadestar, who was surrounded by a group of questioning WindClanners. Stormflower kept her gaze on the ground, avoiding eye contact.

Shadestar only gave short, blunt answers to the cats as he started to lead his cats away. Stormflower hung back as Haretail picked up pace to walk alongside Shadestar. Stormflower trailed after the group. The cats seemed not to notice her yet and instead direct their attention towards the leader and deputy. Leaftail was also not answering any questions.

Before long they had crossed the log without incident and were

padding along the shore of the lake back towards home. Aspenpaw bounded towards Stormflower, a gleam in her amber eyes. "You're part of a prophecy?! That's SO cool! I bet you're gonna be just like Stormbringer, Harbringer of the Storms!"

Stormflower smiled. *I wish I thought as optomistically as that.* "Yeah, and I'm gonna bring a huge storm that'll wash away all our problems., so we can have all the fat prey we want!" She figured she might as well not depress the bouncy apprentice.

Aspenpaw's fluffy tail flicked happily. "Crows are my favorite! I love hunting them, too!" To demonstrate her skills, Aspenpaw bunched her legs up and sprang high in the air, swiped at it, and landed softly.

"Good job. Scorchwing sure is training you well. You might just even be one of the best hunters in the Clan!" Stormflower praised. "Keep up the good work." Aspenpaw grinned widely and sprinted away, towards her black-furred mentor.

* * *

That night, Stormflower dreamt of darkness. It was black all around her. Then a fiery cat approached her. Firestrike. His face was serious, and a little sad.

"Firestrike," Stormflower said, her voice breaking. "Why did this happen to me? Why am I chosen out of every cat here? What's going on?"

Firestrike stopped in front of her and reached out his neck, brushing muzzles. Surprised, Stormflower took a little step back. Firestrike withdrew. "Sorry. It's habit, thanks to Valiant." He looked straight in her eyes. "I do not know why, Stormflower. I was summoned here because of your feelings. But think about it. Would you rather someone else have to carry this burden, and feel this pain? Would you rather it be an innocent kit or a young apprentice who have this fate? Or perhaps your leader, who is already under so much worry and pressure and work?"

Stormflower turned her gaze to the darkness in front of her. It was

the purest black she'd seen, just like the shadow cat. *The shadow cat?*

"No," Stormflower said defiantly. Firestrike grinned in relief. Then, with a poof of orange, he disappeared. A wave of cold washed over Stormflower, and she grew rigid, her eyes wide. It wasn't the kind of cold you'd feel when touching ice. It was the feeling. Malicious and unforgiving. Stormflower turned.

It was the shadow cat, with its pupiless eyes, staring at her. The darkness emanated from him. Stormflower opened her mouth to speak, but no words came out. The entity walked towards her, and before it could touch her she woke up, sides heaving.

After a few minutes she regained her bearings. She sat up, starting to groom her ruffled fur. Morning light streamed in through the entrance, birdsong filling the air, illuminating everything with a soft, warm glow.

Today was the meeting. Today, it was all decided.

Art Book Contest Entry! :3

[image]

Here you go, X-LightTheNight-X :D!

I did this a while back. It's supposed to be Firepool, but idk

HahA I'm so awkward when it comes to art

sorry for quality/lighting it's 8:18

The Meeting (1/2)

[image]

Stormflower walked alongside Shadestar and Leaftail. Butterflies swam in her belly nonstop; her tail wouldn't stop twitching. Oh how she wished she was in her warm, comfy nest right now!

"Calm down, Stormflower," Leaftail meowed, flicking her shoulder, but even the tortiseshell looked apprehensive.

"Everything is happening so fast," Stormflower said. "And why won't you guys share the details of the prophecy? You never told me how you know I'm the one, only: 'from the phrases of the prophecy. We just know.' That makes no sense!"

"We don't know for sure," Shadestar interjected with an irritated swish of the ears. "But you know that... feeling you get?" When he saw Stormflower's blank expression, he shook his head and said, "Nevermind. Just go with it, mousebrain!"

The water from the lake lapped at her paws. She didn't mind the water - in fact, it made her feel at peace. The lines receded, and the trio padded on, soon approaching the fallen trunk.

Shadestar leapt on first, followed by Stormflower with leaftail bringing up the rear. The scent of many cats still lingered on the bark, and it didn't creak like it normally did because of so much weight.

They passed the trunk and entered the fringe of saplings and small trees. Stormflower wished she could just run away, back to the moor and the wind and her Clanmates, not here in this ominous place. It was more beautiful at night, where the Rock seemed to glow in the moonlight.

Finally they arrived at the edge. The WindClanners were the last ones to come. Duskfang, Darkpool, and... what was his name? Pineleaf. The tom with the strange pelt patterns.

Shadestar led them down, greeting the other leaders with a curt nod.

"Now then, let's get started," Hollystar said once they were situated. "We-"

"I hate to interrupt," A voice said. They turned, and Stormflower was surprised to see it was Pineleaf. His voice was deep and silky, and his abnormally slanted eyes were narrowed in amusement.

"What is it, Pineleaf?" Hollystar sounded annoyed.

"I had a dream last night," Pineleaf announced. "A dream where someone named Wolf told me where to go. I'm getting straight to the point. He said there was something that needed to be obtained. A thing... well, he caleld it an object. So I guess that's our name for it right now. The *Object."*

That name sounds familiar... Wolf... the Object...

"The Object?" Miststar scoffed. "What else did he say?"

"He told me it was on a hill or something. That's it."

The cats talked amongst themselves. Stormflower lost track, and soon she was looking around the clearing, even though she's seen it a million times.

Shadows lurked in almost every corner she saw. Sometimes she thought she glimpsed a flash of green or yellow or blue.

It's just my imagination...

* * *

Sorry it's such a short chapter, and how long it took to finally upload it. Lots of things have been happening, in the real world and virtual world... (including stupid wifi!)

Thanks for everyone, (especially Light), for hanging in there!

The Meeting 2/2

"'A hill' isn't enough information."

Stormflower turned her head back to the conversation.

"That's all the information he gave me," Pineleaf said. "If you want to verify it yourself, call him in your dreams and hope he'll come."

Hollystar glared at the tom. "Learn to have respect for your leaders, Pineleaf."

Pineleaf muttered something unintelligible. Something caught Stormflower's eye in the brambles behind Pineleaf, and she raised her head, ears erect.

"Stormflower?" A voice startled her. It was Shadestar, looking at her worriedly. "What's wrong?"

Stormflower figured she might as well tell them the danger. "I keep seeing shadows... and the hint of eyes There was one behind Pineleaf."

Shadestar followed her gaze. "Certainly, it seems darker than it should be. It is morning, after all."

"Let's not argue," Icestar said to the three cats. She turned to Darkpool and duskfang, who had stayed silent the entire time. "Do you have any vital information we should know? There's no use in hiding it."

A quiet, barely audible voice spoke up from Duskfang. "Um.." She shifted her paws. "I have some... some information.. though it'll probably... disappoint you... but I-"

"Speak up," Darkpool growled next to her.

"Quiet!" Miststar cuffed the dark tom on his ear.

"Go on, Duskfang," Icestar said soothingly to the small RiverClan she-cat, whose ears were drooped in shame.

"Well, A cat named.. F-Fox, told me that there was a hill near the.. oh, what did he call it? The.. sea?"

"What's a sea?" Shadestar asked.

"I have never heard of it, either," Leafpelt ask. "Though I am a medicine cat."

"I don't know," Duskfang said softly. "But Fox said it was.. a great expanse of water.. and Twolegs liked to play in it, and sometimes there were big, pointy things floating on it that Twolegs sat in..."

"Hold on," Stormflower said. "Can we even trust cats names Fox or Wolf? it seems suspicious to me."

"I have never seen a wolf," Hollystar mused. "But by nursery tales I know that they are the biggest, wildest dogs. But these are our only clues. We have to trust them in this."

"A sea, huh?" Pineleaf meowed. "A great expanse of water. "Where do we find it?"

"Fox said... to taste the air.. and when you taste a hint of salt and water, follow it and you will find a sea..."

"Then it's settled," Shadestar said, standing and stretching his long limbs. "We'll-"

"Wait!" Darkpool called, a hint of anger in his tone. "We don't have enough information. We could be walking right into a trap, for all we know..."

And then, the shadows came.

Stormflower noticed Pineleaf and Hollystar's first, who were sitting in front of her. Their shadows stretched unnaturally. It was only morning. The sun couldn't be that high!

Then their shadows thickened, it was like a band of pure black

surrounding the cats. They started panicking, or trying not to, pressing into one another like the body heat of the other would protect them.

The wind blew, harsh and tugging at their fur, bringing with it an eerie scream/whistle, Stormflower couldn't describe it better.

"Stay calm, leaders!" Shadestar's voice could be heard above the clamor.

The shadows started rising.

Appearance

[image]

"What's happening?!" Stormflower asked, her voice coming out an octave higher.

"I don't know," Shadestar said dryly as the shadows continued to rise and take form. Stormflower saw poor Duskfang shivering beside Icestar, her eyes closed tightly.

Finally Stormflower's shadow rose in front of her and took on a cat, layer upon layer forming until the fur began to look russet, it's belly lightening to a white color. Eyes popped open. It was Firestrike. The rest of the shapes had taken form as well.

"Hi!" Firestrike said, grinning at her. "We meet again, just that the whole squad is here today."

For a second, the air was still, filled with tension. Then the cats began to relax realizing they were allies.
"What was that!" Exclaimed Stormflower. "You nearly scared our fur off."
"You know these cats?" Icestar said, her voice low.

"Relax, we aren't going to harm you." A voice came from behind them, and Stormflower turned to see a plump, brown tabby with a shredded ear and scarred nose. He laughed loudly. "I'm Bumblecloud! No. 5 of Valiant."

"That was our new way of traveling easy!" Came a female voice, and a she-cat stepped beside Bumblecloud. She had golden fur with honey-colored eyes. She was long and lean, with a wiry tail. "My name is Scylla. I'm No. 6 of Valiant. That traveling method is good for us. We used to have to use minds."

"Well, it's not good for my heart!" Hollystar said, glancing at Pineleaf for support. As the two argued, Stormflower took the time to look at the remaining shadow-cats.

A white she-cat with sharp heterochromatic eyes was talking to a muscular brown tom with lighter stripes nonchalantly, as if Stormflower and the others weren't there. She guessed they were Cloudleap and Frogleap.

A blind tom with a marbled coat, Toxic, was quietly listening to a chattering young cat who Stormflower guessed was the age of an apprentice. He had silver fur with a darker mask, paws and tail. His eyes were wide and as blue as a midday sky. *He must be Featherstone.*

The last two were hanging around Toxic and Featherstone. One was ginger with stubby legs and green eyes. He had a gray diamond on his forehead. The other was gray with the same green eyes and stumpy legs, with an orange diamond. They were the brothers, Fox and Wolf.

Firestrike had padded up to her. "We heard your conversation. And I saw you looking at the edges of this place." He added in a low voice, "Do you remember those two cats who tried to kidnap you when I first met you? I assumed that was them, or their comrades. It was why we decided to reveal ourselves early."

Stormflower listened quietly, her ears flicking nervously. "Are they still here?"

"I don't think so. I can't sense their prescense."

"That doesn't make it any better. They could be anywhere..."

Her heart fluttered when she thought about the camp. If they were there, injuring her Clanmates at the very moment, she would never forgive herself for not notifying Shadestar earlier. She looked around and saw Hollystar and Scylla still snapping at each other, Pineleaf looking mildly uncomfortable.

"You said there was ten cats of Valiant. I only count nine including you. Where's the last?" Stormflower asked Firestrike.

His eyes glinted proudly. "Ah...our leader, Bane. She isn't here at the moment. Bane doesn't visit the camp very often either, which is why every moment with her is precious. I'm No. 2 of Valiant, so I'm the deputy."

"I should've guesssed," Stormflower mused. "But we need to get to

business. The prophecy. Why are you here?"

"Oh yes. I'll explain that now." He raised his voice, addressing the cats of Valiant. "Pay attention, guys! You Clan cats too. I know our appearance is sudden, and a little concerning I guess, but there's a good reason for it."

Hollystar and Scylla quieted down. Stormflower saw Darkpool wrinkle his nose in disgust, as if he'd rather lie down and go to sleep instead of listen to Firestrike speak. Duskfang had stopped shivering, but was sticking close to her Clan leader. Miststar was sitting beside Shadestar, speaking softly to one another.

Firestrike sighed, and launched into his explanation.

* * *

I hate writing on the tablet so much.
So many typos.
So much pain.
But here, people :UUU

~Sky

p.s. sorry it's short lol